**The Stuff We All Agree on When It Comes to Origins**

Now that I’ve written [a book](http://coldcasechristianity.com/cold-case-christianity-by-j-warner-wallace/), I get the chance to speak around the country and talk about how we, as Christians, assemble circumstantial evidence related to the reliability of the Gospels and the [existence of God](http://coldcasechristianity.com/?p=3140). As a result, I meet all kinds of Christians who hold a variety of views related to the Genesis creation account. Many are “Literal Day” creationists, while others lean toward some version of “Gap Theory”, “Day-Age Creation Theory”, “Creation Revelation Theory”, “Progressive Creation Theory”, “Genesis Creation Day Theory” or “Genesis Literary Theory” Creationism. Some believe that the universe is very young, others that it is very old. Some believe that God created everything in the form we see it in today (as the result of some form of “instantaneous” creation); others that God shaped His creation through some process of progressive interaction. When you ask these folks about the Bible, all of them will tell you that they believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God. All will agree that the Bible is the final authority. All will tell you that they believe what the Bible teaches. Christians simply disagree on how to interpret the first book of Moses.

I’m sensitive to the variety of views held by Christians on this matter. I see the reasonable nature of every view; I recognize that each approach to Genesis chapter one has its own virtues and its own liabilities. I’m not discouraged by this reality, but encouraged that there are so many reasonable resolutions. I *am* discouraged, however, when we allow our fallen human nature to get the best of us. Rather than finding areas of agreement, most of us choose to divide over areas of divergence. Regardless of your position related to the Genesis account, I’d like to point out the areas where all of us, regardless of creation theory, agree. As Christians, we all affirm the following premises:

*God originated everything (all space, time and matter) supernaturally*

*God created the material universe (and our world) in incremental steps over a period of time (six literal days or six “ages”)*

*God was actively involved in the creation of all life (life is not the result of an unguided natural process)*

*God prepared everything in the universe as a home for mankind, the last of his creation*

*God created the first humans in his “image”*

*God’s relationship to his creation is accurately described in the Bible*

As Christians, we all agree that God exists. He is the creator of the universe and all life within it. While we agree on the aforementioned critical, foundational issues related to God’s creation, we disagree on how long this process took, and precisely how God shaped each object of his creation (did God create everything in the final form we see today, or did God progressively guide his creation over some period of time?). We agree on the big stuff and disagree on the details.

It’s interesting to note that Christians also agree with atheists on a several important premises related to the nature of the universe:

*Everything in the universe (all space, time and matter) came into existence from nothing at a point in the past*

*Life on our planet appeared in incremental steps over a period of time*

*Humans appear later in history relative to the appearance of other animals*

*Humans possess a consciousness that is unique to the animal world*

As Christians, we often think that we disagree with atheists on everything when it comes to the origin of the universe and the origin of life, but that isn’t actually the case. We also tend to think, as Christians, that we ought to agree with one another on everything when it comes to the origin of the universe and the origin of life, but I’m not sure that ought to be the case either. Christians disagree with one another on secondary issues. We disagree with atheists on the most important issue: Does God exist and is He actively involved in the creation of the universe? That happens to be the most significant question we can ask as a culture. The answer shapes everything in our worldview; what we believe about our origin determines largely how we will choose to live our lives.

So it seems to me that Christians have a choice. We can focus on the areas where we disagree with one another (secondary issues related to the amount of time taken and the precise mechanisms used by God), or we can focus on the area where we disagree with an unbelieving world (the foundational issue of God’s existence). I am inclined to begin my discussions with Christians by uniting around our common knowledge related to God’s existence and interaction in the universe, rather than dividing over our points of divergence. At the same time, I am also inclined to begin my conversations with non-believers by pointing out our areas of agreement before I address he most important foundational issue that divides us. It’s easy to forget that we have a lot in common, but these points of agreement ought to unite us as we engage other Christians and inspire us to begin a conversation with unbelievers who need to hear the Gospel.

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